

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

OCTOBER 5, 2006

LANSING CENTER
333 E. MICHIGAN
LANSING

PRESENT FOR THE NRC

Keith Charters, Chair
Bob Garner, Vice-Chair
Mary Brown
Darnell Earley
John Madigan
Frank Wheatlake

ABSENT FOR THE COMMISSION

Jerry Hall

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Becky Humphries, Director
Dennis Fedewa, Chief Deputy
Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy
Other DNR Staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman Charters called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the NRC to order at 3:09 p.m. The Committee of the Whole is a working session of the NRC.

Legislative Update

Rodney Stokes, Legislative Liaison, reported the following:

- **Governor Granholm** signed into law a series of Bills referred to as the "Forestry Package Bills." These Bills had been discussed, over time, with the NRC. The DNR had opposed several versions of these Bills as they worked through the Legislature, but were able to reach agreement with the Bill sponsors and the Forest Industry on the various issues passed by the Legislature and signed into law.
- **SB 1349:** Creates a Commission on Vehicle/Deer Collisions within the DNR. The Department opposes this Bill.
- **HB 6401:** Amends Part 811, Off-Road Vehicles, 1994 PA 451, to exempt private land ORV riders and passengers from the requirement to wear approved helmets and eyewear if operating at speeds of 25 miles per hour or less. The Department opposes this bill.
- **SB 924:** Seeks to provide for authorization to replace "lost or destroyed" annual Michigan State Park motor vehicle permits and Off-Road Vehicle permits. The Department supports this bill.
- **SB 1394:** proposed to amend Part 401, 1994 PA 451, to prohibit taking of game by use of a tranquilizer propelled from a bow or firearm. The Department position is neutral on this issue.

Mr. Stokes noted that the Legislature is not in session at this time. They will be in session for one day following election week and for a short time in mid-December.

Washington D.C. Report

Director Humphries stated the bill reauthorizing the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Action of 2006 worked its way through the federal House of Representatives in the past week. She noted that Michigan is concerned with the reduction from \$20 million to \$16 million in the funding authorization level. It now has to go back to the Senate for concurrence. **Kelley Smith, Chief, Fisheries Division**, prepared testimony for the hearing. It is Michigan's hope that this will assist in funding Great Lakes restoration projects.

Director Humphries stated she met with Ron DeHaven while in Colorado recently. On July 21, 2006, the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) published a final rule entitled, "Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program and Interstate Movement of Farmed or Captive Deer, Elk, and Moose" to take effect October 19, 2006. There was a concern that this rule will preempt State requirements for movement of cervids into States to the extent that the State requirements are in conflict with this rule. In the meeting with Mr. Dehaven and others on this issue, it was decided that they will not take action on this issue and they will either: 1) reopen and begin redeveloping the Rule; 2) they will reopen the rule and do minor modifications; or 3) they will implement the rule and work to revise while implemented. The USDA has agreed to work with the states on this issue. The Michigan Department of Agriculture has also issues with this Rule.

Introductions

Shari Dann introduced students from her Michigan State University Environmental Education class.

Cheboygan to Gaylord Trail

Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy, presented an update on trespass issues along the Mullett Lake portion of the Cheboygan to Gaylord Trail. This segment of the trail, previously closed to snowmobile use, will be opened up to snowmobiles on December 1, 2006. She stated that in October 2003, the DNR sent letters to landowners along this segment of the trail seeking removal of trespasses. In May 2004, DNR staff physically posted stickers on trespass structures and items requesting removal. In June 2004, staff went door-to-door to request removals. If there were several failed attempts to personally contact owners, notes were left in their doors. In April 2005, the DNR again provided notice to landowners that a formal survey had been done and identified items in trespass and asked for removal by May 2005. Several of the trespass issues have been resolved and staff is negotiating with landowners on the remaining issues. The DNR is seeking legal advice on addressing the remaining trespass issues to assure removal prior to December 1, 2006.

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD)

Bill Moritz, Chief, Wildlife Division, reported that EHD has been diagnosed in two Michigan white-tailed deer. The two deer, one free-ranging and one privately owned, were from Allegan County. EHD is an acute, infectious, often fatal viral disease contracted by wild ruminants but most commonly affects white-tailed deer. EHD is not transmitted from one animal to another by direct contact, and it is not transmissible to humans. The virus is transmitted by the bite of infected insects including midges, gnats, and other biting flies, and occurs in late summer and early fall. Insects die with the onset of frost. This virus is not considered a threat to the deer herd statewide.

Youth Hunting Activities

Alan Marble, Chief, Law Enforcement Division, reported that the number of hunter safety students has increased this year. **Chuck Nelson, Office of Communications**, reported that junior license sales were up 28 percent over last year; small game license sales were up 21 percent; Junior fur harvest license sales were up 25 percent; junior deer combo licenses increased sharply; and junior archery license sales were down 51 percent (resulting from the combo license increase). **Chairman Charters** was pleased with the report and said youths are the future stewards of the resource, and this process has to be ongoing.

Alan Marble reported that approximately 10,000 youth apprentice licenses were sold this season of which 2/3 were to juniors and 1/3 to individuals over 17 years of age who wish to get into hunting.

Mike Bailey, Wildlife Division, stated that low water tables have negatively affected the youth waterfowl season. However, there was excellent participation where the water tables were higher. He reported there was good participation in the Youth Deer hunt.

Chairman Charters asked that the issue of allowing baiting on October 1 for the Youth Deer hunt be addressed prior to the 2007 Youth hunting season. He noted that, if you want to retain hunters, a good product is needed.

DNR Offices

The issue of open/closed DNR offices was briefly discussed.

Fall State Park Activities

Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division, reported on the various fall activities taking place in Michigan's State Parks. These activities are created to stimulate park use in September and October. So far 40 locations have 56 fun events and activities set for September and October. **Chairman Charters** complimented Mr. Olson and his staff for their enthusiasm in creating these events.

Bear Hunting

Commissioner Garner reported on two cases where bear permits have been transferred to youths – one from a Fisheries Division employee and one from a Law Enforcement employee – where the hunt was successful. **Bill Moritz** noted that there have been over 80 transfers of bear permits to youths.

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The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m. and the Public Appearances portion of the meeting convened at 4:40 p.m.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Dennis Fijalkowski, Michigan Wildlife Conservancy
Clinton Wells, Grand Ledge
Tom Lounsbury, United Sportsmen's Alliance (USA)
Denise Massey, Michigan Citizens for Cougar Recognition
Patrick Ruzs, Michigan Wildlife Conservancy
Jenness Weigand, Citizens for a Quiet Community
Ellen Nitz, Citizens for A Quiet Community

MINUTES – NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

PAGE 4

OCTOBER 5, 2006

Alan Miltich, Liberty Township Supervisor, Jackson
Wendy Chamberlin, Parma Township Supervisor
Cindy Evans, Battle Creek

Dennis Fijalkowski, Michigan Wildlife Conservancy, requested more serious consideration by the DNR of the population of cougars in Michigan. He asked for protection of cougars and requested the DNR develop a management plan deeming cougars a wild breeding species in Michigan while at the same time protecting public safety.

Commissioner Earley recommended better and more positive communication between the public and the DNR on this issue. He does not believe, at this time, that the science has been established. Therefore, developing a protection plan would be difficult at this time. More discussions need to be held as a first step.

Clinton Wells, Grand Ledge, asked for the legal definition of a commercially manufactured black powder substitute and asked that smokeless black powder for muzzleloaders be allowed.

Tom Lounsbury, United Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) and an Outdoor Writer, said USA fully supports Director Humphries. He deals with the DNR frequently and appreciates the fact that calls are returned and that the staff is competent and helpful. He commended the NRC on lowering the hunting age for youth hunters.

PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARD

Director Humphries presented the Partners in Conservation Award to Commemorative Bucks of Michigan. **Dr. Dawn Merritt, President, Commemorative Bucks of Michigan, and Bob Stevens, Scoring Chairman of Commemorative Bucks** were present to receive the Award.

Commemorative Bucks of Michigan has provided valuable assistance and information to the hunters of Michigan and the DNR for 25 years. Last year, the seventh edition of the Michigan Big Game Records Book was published. This book exists because volunteer members of Commemorative Bucks make time to measure and record hundreds of bear, deer, elk, and turkey harvested in Michigan every year.

For the dedication of members in maintaining Michigan's big game records, the DNR and NRC recognized Commemorative Bucks of Michigan, on its 25th anniversary, of contributing to Michigan's wildlife resources.

Director Humphries presented a white pine plaque to Commemorative Bucks of Michigan.

SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL, MICHIGAN INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE AWARDS PRESENTATION

Chairman Charters stated: "Representatives of the Michigan Involvement Committee of Safari Club International are here to present awards to the 2006 Michigan Conservation Officer of the Year. Also, they will present prizes to hunters who were timely in their response to the 2005 deer seasons mail survey.

"Safari Club International has provided supplemental funding and support to many Wildlife Division programs. Its support of research on moose, bear, bobcat, wolves, and deer has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of wildlife so that wildlife management is firmly grounded in scientific information."

"The Committee has also helped provide incentives to encourage the timely collection of hunter harvest and effort information."

"To qualify for these incentives, a hunter had to respond to the mail survey within two weeks. The winner was randomly drawn from the group of those eligible. As a result of the incentive program, hunters responded sooner and the Wildlife Division was able to save time and money in the collection of this valuable information."

"I want to personally thank the Michigan Chapters of Safari Club International for its support of the Wildlife Division's programs."

Chairman Charters introduced **Mr. Bob Taylor, Chairman of the Michigan Involvement Committee**, who made the following presentations:

Safari Club International Conservation Officer of the Year: CO Steven Martin

Survey Response Winners:

Rifle Recipient: Joseph Jones from Lake

Muzzleloader Recipient: Mike Retman, Dearborn Heights

Compound Bow Recipient: Gregg O'dell, Davison

PUBLIC APPEARANCES (continued)

Denise Massey, Michigan Citizens for Cougar Recognition, thanked the NRC for the cougar presentation done earlier at the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries meeting. She requested that an objective and thorough assessment of the cougar population in Michigan be done and supports DNR staff and citizens to work together on this issue. Ms. Massey also requested that recreational areas across Michigan post warning signs of the potential dangers of cougars.

Patrick Ruz, Michigan Wildlife Conservancy, recommended development of a centralized data base service as well as development of a team to address the cougar issue in Michigan.

Jenness Weigand, Citizens for a Quiet Community, said that nothing has been done to reduce noise from the Island Lake Shooting Range and wants action taken to do so. **Peter Manning, Assistant Attorney General**, affirmed that there is pending litigation against the DNR on this issue.

Ellen Nitz, Citizens for a Quiet Community, had read an article in an MUCC publication regarding offering archery equipment for schools and recommended that sporting clays ranges be removed from the Island Lake Shooting Range and bow and arrows be added. She does not have a problem with rifles at the range.

Alan Miltich, Liberty Township Supervisor, Jackson, saw a juvenile cougar on his property in early June and believes he has a family of cougars in his area. The Township will be educating citizens of what to do if a cougar is sighted.

Director Humphries recommended that, if anyone has a sighting of a cougar, either call your local DNR Operation Services Center, or call the Report All Poaching line (1-800-292-7800).

Wendy Chamberlin, Parma Township Supervisor, sighted an eight foot cat running across the road in front of her and believes it was a cougar. She also had sighted mountain lions in her area on three different occasions in an eight month period of time.

Cindy Evans, Battle Creek, reported that her neighbors had reported 74 cougar sightings in the area since May 3, 2006, and north of Battle Creek 25 sightings have been reported. She said she received a call from an individual who had found cougar scat. She expressed concern with

MINUTES – NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

PAGE 6

OCTOBER 5, 2006

safety in the area and requested assistance from the DNR on this issue. She was referred to Doug Reeves, Wildlife Division.

Director Humphries stated that Wildlife Division has developed communication protocol to address cougar sightings. All DNR personnel will be notified of this protocol of how to properly address incoming calls and sighting reports. She thanked the public for bringing this issue forth.

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The Public Appearances portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. and the Regular Meeting of the NRC convened at 6:00 p.m.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 7, 2006 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Earley, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

SPECIAL FIREARM DEER HUNT FOR DISABLED HUNTERS, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 17 OF 2006

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Madigan, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Charters announced that **Bob Garner** had been appointed by Governor Granholm to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board for a term ending 10/1/2009.

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by **Commissioner Madigan**, to appoint **NRC Chairman Keith Charters** to represent the NRC on the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board. Motion unanimously carried.

DIRECTOR'S ACTION

Director Humphries approved all Director's Action items on the Agenda **except the New Metallic Mineral Lease Document and Land Transaction Case #20060071, Gaylord Forest Management Unit-Antrim County, The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Tract.** These two items will be held over for Action in November 2006.

Regarding Land Transaction Case #20060071, **Chairman Charters** commended the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy for gifting their portion of the value of the land.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NRC Policy Committee On Land Management – See Attached Minutes

NRC Policy Committee on Technology, Information, Marketing and Education – See Attached Minutes

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries – See Attached Minutes

Hunting and Fishing License Program Development Work Group

Commissioner Wheatlake, Work Group Chair, stated the Work Group has been meeting and will develop a proposed plan for presentation to the NRC at its November 9, 2006 meeting.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Wheatlake reported that, in addition to the Chairing the Work Group meetings, he will be meeting with the Charter Boat Captains.

Commissioner Earley thanked Jim Wood and Jason Cherry for meeting with him in Saginaw to discuss ideas for the defunct water slide in the City.

Commissioner Garner enjoyed hunting in Wyoming.

Commissioner Madigan enjoyed grouse hunting and fishing.

Commissioner Brown enjoyed watching migratory birds.

Chairman Charters attended the International Woodcock Symposium held in Michigan and said he gleaned some great information.

Chairman Charters commended the Hunting and Fishing License Program Development Work Group for a good job addressing a difficult task. He specifically applauded staff for their extensive efforts and time dedicated to pulling materials together for this Plan. He said this is a very important issue and that it needs to be addressed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

**NRC Policy Committee on Land Management
Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2006
Lansing Center
Lansing**

Present

Commissioner Keith Charters, Chair
Commissioner Mary Brown (at 9:30 a.m.)
Commissioner John Madigan
Commissioner Frank Wheatlake
Murdock Jemerson, Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks
Jim DeClerck, Saginaw Field and Stream Club
Warren Suchovsky, Forest Management Advisory Council
Michael Carr, Trans Superior Resources Inc.
Dennis Donohue, Environmental Counsel, Kennecott Eagle Minerals Co.
Nell Kuhnmuensch, Governmental Consultants Services Inc.
Gary Kohlhepp, DEQ
Robert Delaney, DEQ
Director Rebecca Humphries
Chief Deputy Dennis Fedewa
Resource Management Deputy Mindy Koch
David Freed, DNR
Lynne Boyd, DNR
Ron Olson, DNR
Rodney Stokes, DNR
Ann Wilson, DNR
Joe Spieles, DNR
Janet Canode, DNR
Cara Boucher, DNR
Tom Wellman, DNR
Kelly S. Carter, DNR
Cindy Salmon, DNR

Chairman Keith Charters called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

1. Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks – Update

Murdock Jemerson, Chair of the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks, explained that part of the Committee's charge is to make recommendations to the Director using citizen input. The Committee recently held a meeting with the city of Alpena on September 19, 2006. The issue was the Department-owned Rockport property, and the transfer of it from management by Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, to management by Parks and Recreation.

The Citizens Committee wanted to hear what the residents of Alpena felt about this. Early in the day, the Committee toured the property, and then held the public meeting in the evening. Over 70 residents were in attendance.

Most of the comments were favorable, but there were some people in attendance that felt that there are two other state parks in the area, Negwegon and Thompson's Harbor, and the fact that the DNR was not able to complete the Master Plans for those parks.

At the regular committee meeting on September 20, 2006, they again listened to public comment regarding this. At that meeting the Committee amended its Resolution based on those comments. The amended Resolution No. 2006-04 was passed unanimously. The Resolution is to seek a Coastal Zone Management Grant to obtain funds to develop a management plan for the Rockport property, as well as the potential to link the plan to future uses with the Negwegon and Thompson's Harbor State Parks.

Chairman Charters asked **Mr. Jemerson** what action the NRC needs to take on this, if any.

Ron Olson, Parks and Recreation Chief, explained the Committee is looking for support from the NRC, and is providing this for information purposes.

2. Metallic Minerals Lease Document Review

Chairman Charters noted that at the last meeting there were two issues that Commissioner Madigan and he had concerns with, in the way the lease was presented.

Lynne Boyd, Chief of Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, noted that one of those issues was extensions. There was a 10-year primary term, and then extensions from years 11-21 are discretionary on the part of the Department. FMFM has gone back and changed that extensions are not discretionary; if the company requests an extension, they will be granted an extension. These extensions apply if there is no production on-site.

Chairman Charters asked if Kennecott has any comments on this. **Dennis Donohue** from Kennecott felt this was a good change. **Michael Carr** from Trans Superior Resources Inc. also felt this was a reasonable change.

Kennecott provided a handout of 31 comments at this meeting. Mr. Donohue noted they don't implicate serious problems; they should just be considered in finalization of the lease.

Lynne Boyd said the other issue that FMFM was asked to take a look at was reclassifying the lease after the lease has been issued as a development lease. The change was made so that the lease can only be reclassified (with cause) up to the point the DNR approves an exploration plan.

Chairman Charters asked **Commissioners Madigan, Wheatlake, and Brown** if they are comfortable with these changes. All responded yes. He also asked those present that are involved with the mining industry. They were okay with these changes as well.

Dennis Donohue from Kennecott commented that his only other issue in finalizing the document concerns mining reclamation development – Part 632 in particular, and the bonding required. He recommended the wording in the lease cross-reference Part 632.

Chairman Charters clarified by asking that his problem is not with reclamation, but a problem with DNR may have one idea of what the reclamation is, and Department of Environmental Quality may have another. **Mr. Donohue** responded "yes."

Lynne Boyd responded that the DNR does not support that approach. The DNR feels we have a unique responsibility, and we should have the ability to enforce our lease. In the other leasing programs, the DNR at times is much more able to take action against the lessee because of the contract, than the regulatory agency is based on the regulations. However, the DNR works very closely with the DEQ in terms of not having

those conflicts out there. They are not always the same entity – sometimes the permit transfers to an operator, and the lessee remains the responsible party to the state of Michigan, above and beyond the regulatory responsibilities on the DEQ permit.

Commissioner Wheatlake is concerned that you can't buy a bond for 40 years.

Mr. Donohue responded that it is possible. **Lynne Boyd** noted that if a bond isn't in place, the mine is shut down. There is flexibility allowed in the type of bond.

Deputy Koch responded that this lease was developed with input from all areas – both the mining industry and environmental groups. This parallels what we do with oil and gas leasing, sand and gravel leasing, etc. We feel very strong about the need to have our own bond and a reclamation plan in place.

Lynne Boyd added that we need to discuss the royalty issue, because that is probably why **Mr. Carr (Trans Superior Resources, Inc.)** is here. This issue was the most divisive and complicated issue for the work group.

The group liked the sliding scale concept in the old lease, but it went up too fast and it didn't go high enough. We tried to take a look across the country, and lots of folks provided information.

We ended up keeping a sliding scale – you hit the max now at \$500, which is at 10 percent on the underground mines, and 10.5 percent on the surface mines. We lowered the scale overall for the industry, but took it out longer. We spent a lot of time looking at this, but did not reach total agreement. We have had comments that we are still too low on our royalty rates, and also comments that we are too high. We haven't issued a lease in over two years, due to trying to work out the royalty issue. We have a backlog of 96 leases waiting for this to be finalized, and several thousand acres out under review, so we are anxious to move forward.

There is a mechanism in the lease, where if the company feels the royalty is way out of line, they can request it go before the Administrative Board.

Mr. Carr feels the royalty is too high and will cause companies to look elsewhere.

Chairman Charters asked **Mr. Donohue** from Kennecott if he agreed. **Mr. Donohue** stated that he didn't have a position, but they are willing to live with the lease.

Tom Wellman, FMFM, stated that Trans Superior's comments were considered, and the initial rates were actually reduced after input from Mr. Carr through this process of establishing rates.

Director Humphries asked **Chairman Charters** if he would like staff to consider the comments made and bring back a clean copy of the lease at the next meeting for approval.

Lynne Boyd stated that she just received Kennecott's comments today, so she hasn't had a chance to review them. She also noted that the two changes we discussed today have not been included in the final version yet.

Chairman Charters stated he would like staff to make the two discussed revisions, and take these other comments under advisement in preparation of the final version, and a decision will be made no later than November.

Commissioner Brown stated that any additional comments need to be provided right away; the NRC should have a final product in two weeks. This will be up for Director's action at the November NRC meeting.

3. Land Use Order of the Director

Deputy Koch explained this order is for the Wildwood State Forest Campground, which has not been maintained for 16 years. Before that it was a partnership that the DNR had with Bourret Township. The DNR stopped maintaining the facility in the 1980s. The Township has not been able to continue with operation and maintenance, and therefore, we would like to abandon it as a State Forest Campground, thus allowing for dispersed camping in that area.

This will just formally take it off the books as a State Forest Campground. The commissioners were in agreement.

Commissioner Wheatlake wanted to discuss another item on the NRC agenda; specifically Land Transaction Case #20060071, Wildlife Land Acquisition from the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

Specifically the Conservancy spent \$80,000 for this property in 2004, and now we are proposing to spend \$116,000 for that property two years later. He doesn't feel that the Conservancy putting \$36,000 in their pocket two years later is appropriate. There should be a set percentage fee that we pay when partnering with conservancies.

Dave Freed, Chief of Land and Facilities, responded that this was piece of land that we had worked for years to acquire. The appraisal was done this year, and we feel it is a good appraisal. Since the 1970s, the law says we need to offer landowners the fair market value for property.

Chairman Charters asked the Director if we shouldn't put this requirement on the top of our legislative priorities list for change. **Director Humphries** agreed, especially if we are doing more and more purchasing in partnership with other folks.

Deputy Koch stated that we can accept gifts – we could have a clause that we would pay a set amount of interest, or fair market value, whichever is lower at the time of DNR purchase. The difference from fair market value could be a gift.

Chairman Charters stated he would call Glen Chown and state that we have a problem with this purchase. He would offer \$97,000 and ask them to gift the remainder back to the state. **Deputy Koch** acknowledged this is legal. This item was tabled pending further information.

4. Generally Accepted Forestry Management Practices

Lynne Boyd stated that FMFM went over this last month in great detail, so she is just going to answer questions this time around. These are not best management practices – they are voluntary.

Commissioner Wheatlake thanked **Warren Suchovsky** for serving on the group. He asked Mr. Suchovsky if he felt this would create any problems for the loggers, he responded no.

This will be back for approval in November. **Chairman Charters** adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

**NRC Policy Committee on
Technology, Information, Marketing and Education
October 5, 2006
Lansing Center
Lansing, MI**

Presentations

Tina Stojakovich, Office of Communications, presented recent updates to the DNR Web site; future updates will include a page on cougars, a new kids Web page, and an education site. **Bill Pemble**, Office of Land and Facilities, highlighted some of the new points of interest of the Campground Reservation System and Retail Sales System, including a shopping cart feature.

Denise Gruben, Land and Facilities, and **Pat Stewart** Office of Communications, gave a brief description on the status of the Sportsmen Against Hunger program, including some of the promotional efforts taken to date.

Janet Canode, Earl Wolf, and Jon Spieles, Office of Communications, spoke about the visitor centers—their history, outreach programs and future projects.

Mary Emmons, Law Enforcement Division, gave an update on the Archery in the Schools program.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

**NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries
October 5, 2006
Lansing Center
Lansing, MI**

Committee Chairman Garner called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. Commissioner Madigan was also present for the Committee. Commissioners Charters, Brown, Earley and Wheatlake were present for the NRC.

Wildlife Regulations

Michael Bailey, Wildlife Division, discussed the proposed spring turkey regulations, which included a change to turkey units and boundary lines. Proposed season dates and quotas are as follows: General Limited Quota Hunts (53,440) -- April 23 to May 31; Private land limited (65,000) -- April 23 to May 6; Guaranteed Hunt Period (Unlimited Lic.) -- May 7 to May 31. There are 48,147 square miles of hunting area proposed open.

Angler Survey Program Update for Great Lakes and Inland Lakes

David Clapp, Fisheries Division, presented an overview of the Creel Survey Program. A creel survey is used to collect angling effort and harvest information of a fishery. The Inland Creel survey started in 1930's and the Great Lakes creel survey started in 1985. Now the two surveys are combined into the Statewide Angler Survey program, which occurred in 2003. The survey provides information to a variety of groups: fisheries division, other agencies, and the public. For Fisheries Division, this survey helps with stocking evaluation, regulation evaluation, quotas, total allowable catch development, and a status and trends evaluation. The survey also provides status and trends of sea lamprey parasitism.

Vehicle-Deer Collisions

Brent Rudolph, Wildlife Division, and Dr. Shawn Riley, Michigan State University. Brent discussed the current research efforts occurring in the state in relation to deer movement. Throughout public meetings, hunters were concerned about the use of Deer-Vehicle Collisions (DVC) as indicators of deer population levels and as a component of population goal development, especially in southern Michigan. In 2005, the following DVC's were recorded: 58,741 reported collisions, 1,700 human injuries, and 9 human fatalities. In partnership with the DNR, Michigan State University conducted a study looking at Environmental and Human Dimensions of DVC's in southeastern Michigan. The research has statewide implications. The following variables were examined by region (in relation to the roads traveled): crop and forest cover, vehicle miles traveled, and deer densities. No single variable was responsible across regions. Southeast urban areas were the study sites for the human dimensions work: Oakland County. - Pontiac, Washtenaw County- Ann Arbor, and Monroe County- Monroe. The factors that were examined are: daily and seasonal times; location; and road and landscape characteristics. The data collection included crash reports from 900 deer collisions and 900 non deer collisions. A survey was also sent to a random sample of individuals with those sites. Study results indicated that the number of crashes is related to the morning and evening commute and most common between Oct – December. Likelihood of having a DVC is much lower at different times of the day and during different months. Rural commuters had much higher DVC rates (1 in 3) than urban and suburban residents.

Cougars

Dave Hamilton, Missouri Department of Conservation, presented various issues related to cougar occurrences in the Midwest. He outlined the documented distribution of these animals in the Midwestern states and the cougar confirmations since the 1990's. He explained the

movement patterns of cougars and the likelihood of them appearing in Michigan. He also called Michigan's road system a "cougar detection system" pointing out that the high road density and traffic patterns that were discussed in the previous talk about car-deer collisions provide a very strong detection system for cougars. Dave explained the Missouri Cougar Response Team and provided examples of the various animals that are most often mistaken as cougars. Dave concluded by detailing the physical evidence that should be available if cougars are within an area.

Dave Bostick, Wildlife Division, presented the known information of cougar presence in Michigan. Dave explained cougar biology and the various Wildlife Division detection opportunities. Dave also explained the importance of receiving physical evidence. He presented the DNA information that has been documented in relation to cougar presence in Michigan.

Doug Reeves, Wildlife Division, indicated that the Department has received increasing claims of cougar depredation and sightings over the last couple of years, especially in southern Lower Michigan. He indicated that the Departmental responsibility for investigating depredations on livestock was expanded by the legislature from wolves and coyotes to include cougars this fiscal year. He stated that the Department will take reports of cougars seriously and that in cases where there is physical evidence we will investigate but also that sighting reports without physical evidence will just be recorded and mapped. Doug said that the DNR is concerned with public safety and evidence of that includes the movement of nuisance black bear in situations where they have become bold as well as responses to wolf complaints. He stated that the Department has both the responsibility to protect wild cougar, because they are listed as endangered, and also to protect the public. Members of the public may kill cougars that are a clear and immediate threat to human life but may not kill cougars that are causing livestock or pet depredations. Doug said people need to call and report depredation events quickly so that evidence is not lost at kill sites. He also mentioned that depending on the situation, habituated cougars might be tranquilized and taken to zoos or euthanized on the spot depending on their behavior but personnel will have to make those judgments on site.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.